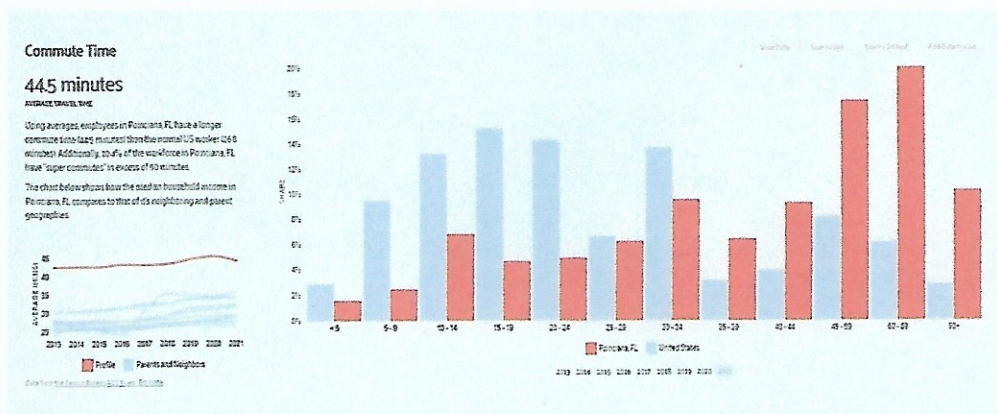


In 2013 Florida Department of Transportation started a study to build the Southport Connector. The following statement appears on page 1 of the study defining the need for the project.

The Poinciana Parkway Southport Connector (Southport Connector) is a proposed limited access facility connecting the community of Poinciana to Florida's Turnpike. Poinciana is an unincorporated residential and commercial community located in Osceola and Polk counties located southwest of the City of Kissimmee and east of Haines City. Poinciana has a population of approximately 83,000 people and the majority of the Poinciana residents are employed in Orange County. The transportation connections to the community are limited and consist primarily of Pleasant Hill Road to the north and Cypress Parkway to the west. Poinciana Parkway from Cypress Parkway to US 17-92 is currently under construction and will provide additional connection to the north. A new connection to Florida's Turnpike will provide an alternative route to jobs and employment centers. The Southport Connector is identified in the Osceola County Expressway Authority (OCX) 2040 Master Plan (see Figure 1).

More than 10 years later the study continues while the data below was recently published about the Poinciana traffic situation



More than 90% use vehicles to get to and from work

Poinciana Avg Commute time is 46 Minutes vs Nat'l Avg 26 Minutes

24% spend 90 min to 2 Hours each day

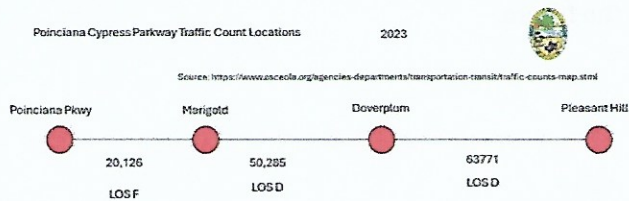
19% spend 2 hour to 3 hours each day

11% spend more than 3 hours each day

54% of Poinciana Commuters Spend more than two hours every day commuting to support their families which is more than double the national average

Source: <https://www.bestplaces.net/transportation/zip-code/florida/poinciana/34759>

Adding Lanes to Cypress Parkway?



The above chart showing the year 2023 Osceola Traffic Count information for Poinciana's Cypress Parkway shows the current status of the road and the level of service (LOS). An alternate proposal to the building of the Southport Connector Expressway has been to expand Cypress Parkway by adding lanes, leaving the existing intersections in place. Using the road capacity data from <https://www.mikeontraffic.com/numbers-every-traffic-engineer-should-know/#:~:text=The%20ideal%20capacity%20per%20lane,directions%20at%20the%20same%20time> shows based on the 2023 volumes shows what the project traffic volumes would look like compared to capacity

For Cypress Parkway west of Marigold the current traffic count for the two lane road is 20,126. The road capacity data for a two lane road of this type is 18,300 which gives a LOS of F meaning the volume today is more than the road is designed to handle. Expanding the road from 2 lanes to 4 would increase the capacity to 36,800 which would be acceptable.

For Cypress Parkway between Marigold and Doverplum the 2023 volume was 50,285. For a four lane road of this type the acceptable capacity is 36,800 meaning that the actual 2023 is well above capacity. If the road were to be expanded to 6 lanes the capacity would be increased to 53,300 which would put the level of service nearing capacity based on 2023 volume after construction.

For Cypress Parkway between Doverplum and Pleasant Hill the 2023 volume is 63,771. For a four lane road that is well exceeding the rated capacity of 36,800. If the road could be expanded from 4 lanes to six the capacity would be expanded to 53,300 which is still well below the capacity required to handle the 2023 traffic volumes.

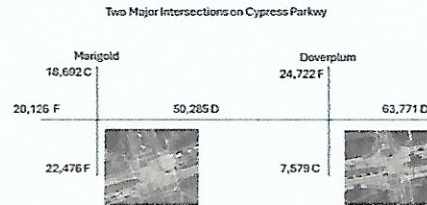
In summary, the alternate proposal to simply expand Cypress Parkway in Poinciana by adding additional lanes will not handle the 2023 traffic volumes much less the future.

In looking at the Southport Connector proposal the project would add not just a single lane in each direction but initially four additional express lanes to Cypress Parkway expanding the total capacity for the two sets of 4 lane road to 73,600 which will more than handle the 2023 volumes leaving room for expansion. The Southport Connector proposal will also allow future expansion of the four local lanes to six providing for additional future growth to capacity of 90,100.

This number does not even take into consideration that the 4 express lanes will include interchange overpasses and limited access roadway which will increase the total capacity even more.

In summary the numbers show that the alternative of simply adding lanes to Cypress Parkway will not work but the proposal for Southport Connector can relieve the traffic congestion seen today and provide plenty of growth for the future.

Cypress Parkway Signal Timing Issue



A second issue that must be resolved is whether overpass intersections on Cypress Parkway are needed to address the Cypress Parkway traffic congestion? The map above shows the current traffic counts and LOS for the two major problem intersections, Marigold/ Cypress Parkway and Doverplum /Cypress Parkway.

Aside from the Cypress Parkway traffic counts it is important to look at the counts for Marigold South at the Marigold intersection and the Doverplum Intersection. Both are two lane roads with high traffic counts and F levels of service. Although extra lanes and turning lanes have been added at the intersections there simply is too much traffic trying to enter at those intersections. This creates a dilemma.

Cypress Parkway LOS is already D or F at those intersections . If lengthen the Cypress Parkway green light timings then traffic will back up on the feeder roads making a bad situation even worse. . If you lengthen the feeder road timings, then the Cypress Parkway situation will be made even worse.

The only solution is to build overpasses on Cypress Parkway reducing the total traffic crossing the east/west intersections thus allowing the feeder traffic timings to be lengthened to allow more traffic to flow through while shortening the east/west local traffic timings due to reduced traffic volumes. This is what the proposed Southport Connector with elevated overpasses will do.